

Memories of Fenwick Island by Sandra (McCabe) Robertson
as told to her daughter, Kimberly.

1940s

Spending every summer here on the island since I was born in 1938, Fenwick is my home. As a kid I loved to swim and play in the sand. My parents enjoyed clamming and crabbing at the north end of Fenwick. Back then only one house existed on the bayside. During the summer, we drove back and forth from the beach to our farm in Roxana (8 miles inland) to work in the garden and tray eggs. Dad had over 50,000 chickens and sold the eggs to restaurants in Ocean City. Mom and I cleaned vegetables to can, shelled what seemed like thousands of peas and prepared local berries to make jams most mornings before I was allowed to play on the beach. My most favorite treat was to go to Clark's store (Dagsboro St.) with my cousin Mary Jane and have a coke or milkshake and crackers. After I turned 11 or 12, Mom began letting me drive the car on Bunting Ave. It was just a sandy path then less than a mile long but I felt I had all the freedom in the world behind the wheel.

A pitcher mouth pump provided us with fresh water along with a barrel on the roof to collect rainwater. Dad attached a hose to it to give us "hot" showers. The outhouse stood on the north side of the cottage. Coming from Roxana, we'd stop at Rolly Hall's general store on Rt.54 (across from Treasure Beach) to get blocks of ice for the icebox and kerosene for our lamps. We didn't have electricity until I was 10 or so. Of course, during the war, we couldn't have any light shinning after sunset. Mom put up thick black curtains on all the windows so we could at least light a candle or two inside.

1950s

After they built the Chesapeake Bay Bridge lots of weekenders started coming to Fenwick. My parents had built several cottages which we rented by the week for 4 or 5 weeks during the summer to folks from Baltimore and Philadelphia. But with the town having a few hotels, many people like us began renting out rooms in our houses. My parents bought the house on the corner of South Carolina and Rt.1 (Nantucket's restaurant today) in 1958 to set-up our Rental Office. Mom got a wringer washing machine to wash the many cotton sheets after each weekend. Everything dried on clotheslines in those days. I dreaded windy days because often the lines would fall down and we had to wash all the sheets over again!

We built the Fenwick Island Sub Shop next to our home in 1958. Local kids from Selbyville High School worked for me in the Sub Shop along with children, such as Jean, JoAnne and Janice Lathbury from Dagsboro whose parents built a row of cottages on South Carolina Ave. The Sub Shop was a bit of a hang out for young people and we served subs and pizza for 20 years. Regular customers included the Warren boys who owned the Esso Station, all the lifeguards including Sonny Long who taught my daughters to swim at the Sands Hotel, the Adkins who own the Coral Sands, the Hudsons, Lynches, Buntings, Tingles, Evans, and other locals. Of course, we also depended on the tourists like businesses do today. My most famous customer was Dick Clark who visited our beach for many years.